

Xmas Eve 2019
Luke 2: The Christ our Peace

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.
⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ¹

In the Name of Jesus.

⁴⁶ An argument arose among [the disciples] as to which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side ⁴⁸ and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.” ² Luke Nine.

Fear not, my dear ones! This Gospel is beyond us, and all of us! But the Holy Spirit KNOWS this Good News; and He has been pledged, to Jesus, by the Father, to dwell where He is pleased to dwell: ‘this child’ ‘at his side;’ ‘you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger;’ ‘he who is least among all of us.’ Ohhh! Fear not! For all that WE are NOT equipped to call great, the Spirit pledged and given to us does indeed! And He has FOREVER—now He does!—He has The New Day Coming, to teach us what HE considers GREAT!

All foreshadowed by His birth from Mary, as her firstborn son!

Our dear ones Ed and Kathy own and operate some hotels up ‘round the corner, by the highway. I had some of their office people look up some information for me; I was curious about this ‘inn’ that did not have room for God.

Turns out that there was NO Crowne Plaza, NOR a Holiday Inn built in Bethlehem until YEARS after Jesus was born! I mean, Jerusalem! Oodles of ‘em. But not in the sticks!

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 2:1–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 9:46–48). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

So your poor, ign'ant pastor had to search the language Saint Luke used: and, again, Fear not! Evidently, we ALL can learn something!

For the word Saint Luke uses to say there was no room there for the newborn—Saint Luke uses one more time, here; only here:

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” ⁹ They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” ¹⁰ He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the *guest room*,--[*That’s it!*]the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” ¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. ³

Pictures worth a thousand words! Plz see your handout.

The Last Supper mural is from da Vinci. The other two are from da Internet.

It’s hard for someone like me, raised by wolves in the jungle, to appreciate art. But even I KNOW that Jesus in the guest room did NOT use a twenty-four foot long crawfish table, with all the boys on one side! Instead, the artistic man is trying to tell a beast like me a story: all the apostles, all their whispering, all their looking around, a money bag; even a knife. One picture; full story.

The bottom picture is a story too! And WONDERFUL! The parents and the Babe; if a manger, then animals; angels and shepherds—from a different place!—even wise men and their gifts, who, MY Bible says, showed up perhaps two years later. Again: the full story is there. Glory to God in the Highest!

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 22:7–13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

So we get to the middle picture, from the smart people who dig around and cajigger out how people lived back then.

My dear ones: I don't know enough about that impossible language, English. But I must assume that the 'INN' old King James authorized to print meant something like the 'INSIDE' part of the home. What can we say: the 'grown-ups' table, bedroom? The house was crowded; the family altogether, multiple generations; and the poor, little new one, gets a bed; just not the best one.

How NORMAL this all is! Just think of the get-togethers with family, or after hurricanes, when we're putting mattresses and pallets and sleeping bags all around, just so all can have a place to lay their heads.

I remember putting OUR firstborn in a lovely wicker laundry basket, on a pillow, to prop near the fireplace, to dry out her runny, tiny nose.

So, how did the shepherds find this Baby? They searched! And you can picture them asking around that little hamlet, 'Any new births lately? Can you show me where? We're looking for a crowded house...'

And they found.....what men found thousands of times before; a normal, human, everyday occurrence. But they found this Baby, when heaven emptied out—TWICE! Jesus AND His host!—and these SHEPHERDS were just normal enough, just human enough, just SINFUL enough—to praise God that the TASK of Peace between God and Man has now been taken over by a MAN, Who, in...in...in that overlooked, squeezed-in Baby, is God; sleeping in heavenly Peace.

Jesus was promoted, to the grownup table; to the upper room. There was room for Him the night He was betrayed. It was why He came:

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. ⁴

‘Shall we put the Son of God in an animal’s feeding crib, a manger?!’

The Spirit of Jesus said, ‘I’m just One of all y’all. This will do.’

And then....

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized---

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 22:14–27). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Didja hear?! Do you see?! The Spirit of Jesus appearing again: ‘Well, everyone else is confessing sins and being baptized by John; best just to get in line!’

No, ‘Ta-da!’ No fireworks! No EXTRAORDINARY—but as ordinary as anyone else. And then, the Spirit speaks:

‘and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” ⁵

You got in line, dear child of God—many as babies too! Great!!—and were baptized, like gobs of other people.

And from that day, the devil has come after you time and again: ‘If you really ARE a child of God, then, well, where’s the TA-DA?!!! YOU! You ain’t all that different, better, spiritual, patient, loving, kind, obedient, lawful—than rivers of other men!’

Merry Christmas, my dear ones! Your shepherd, your pastor, now gives you your line, when that remarkable devil scares you:

‘Throw all the hurt at me you want; make me question the next man, and myself, and the whole world! But pastor says children of God are remarkable for being unremarkable. Shepherd says being ordinary is extraordinary enough for my Father in heaven. So until you convince Mary’s Boy, now Crucified and Sitting at God’s Right Hand—until you can convince THAT MAN, Jesus, that HE is not fit to rule the Kingdom of God, you cannot convince ME that I am unfit for His rule!’

Actually, my dear ones—I stole a lot of that from Dr. Martin Luther. Let’s all let Luther talk to the old, evil foe. You and I are not equipped for that.

⁵ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 3:21–22). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Instead, we are equipped, we have been baptized, we have been normalized by the Spirit of Jesus: to take the next man, ourselves, each one of us, in our everyday ordinariness and sin; and offer the whole world, in peace, to the One Who is only pleased when we cry out to Him, 'Father!'

'Forgive us our trespasses, in just the same way you see us forgiving daily and much those who trespass against us! Not easy! But ordinary! Human! Just ask the Man in Charge Above! Looks like the rest of us. He's even scarred for good. He knows forgiveness. He knows Peace!'

Merry Christmas! In the Name of Jesus!